





C. C. 20 — 3
cop. 2

SELECTIONS

FROM A WORK ENTITLED

THE IDEAL OF A CHRISTIAN CHURCH,

&c. &c. &c.

ILLUSTRATIVE OF ITS TENDENCY TO PROMOTE

DUTIFULNESS TO THE ENGLISH CHURCH,

UNITY AMONG HER MEMBERS,

AND

CHARITY TOWARDS DISSENTIENTS.

LONDON:
JAMES TOOVEY, 192, PICCADILLY.

1844.



ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following selection of extracts from the “ Ideal of a Christian Church, &c.” must not be understood to imply on the part of the compiler the opinion that any amount of insulated passages can convey a sufficiently accurate idea of the work from which they are taken. So far as they are extracts merely, they must involve the absence of what is so essentially necessary to their illustration—the context. Far less, of course, can so high a claim be set up in behalf of a collection like the following, which is avowedly *one-sided*. Still the present specimens must, at any rate, avail thus far—to shew what the work in question actually does contain, whatever else it may contain. The course here taken is simply a *defensive* one. An attempt, it is well known, is in progress, to obtain some censure of the whole work by means of extracts. At least, then, it is fair to the author, that those who entertain the question of condemning his book on a partial exhibition of its contents, should have the opportunity of knowing something more of it than has been yet distinctly brought under their notice. It may well be supposed that no considerate person will think of expressing a judgment on the book, without first *reading the whole of it*. It is hoped, then, that the present selection may answer two ends—first, and chiefly, that of inducing persons to read a work which otherwise they might have been led to censure upon insufficient grounds; but, at all events, secondly, that of suggesting to thoughtful minds, as a question of conscience, how far they will be right in condemning, or even appearing to condemn, on the ground of its *undutiful and schismatical tendency*, a publication in which are to be found passages such as the following.

It is by no means intended that the extracts here given, are all which might be brought forward in illustration of what the compiler conceives to be the general spirit of the work.

The selection has been made with a view to an impending event, and when it seemed more important to gain time than to secure completeness. But, so far as its aim is to be-speak, not *favour* in behalf of the work, but a *candid consideration* of it, the passages cited will be abundantly sufficient. A reference to the original will convince the reader of one point which is really material, viz. that several of the passages here exhibited occur *in the neighbourhood at least, if not in the immediate context of some of those which have been selected in another quarter with an opposite purpose*; a fact indicative of the very great caution and considerateness which, in the judgment of the selector, are distinctive of the volume, and which are peculiarly remarkable in a work characterized by such intense energy of expression.

Dec. 7, 1844.

I.

DUTIFULNESS TO THE ENGLISH CHURCH.

UNDER the above head are here comprehended passages from the “ Ideal,” &c. tending either, 1. to enforce directly the obligation of a dutiful allegiance to the Church of which we are members: 2. to discourage movements into the Church of Rome: 3. to deprecate the unhealthy, unintelligent, adoption of practices foreign to the habits of our own Church.

I *cannot* understand that a religious person should, for any length of time, doubt that, if he do remain in our Church, he must remain as her faithful and attached son; not standing, as it were, with one foot in England and the other in Rome, but devoting himself with undivided loyalty to his immediate Mother. And if it be asked what definite meaning can be attached to these words, let us, for example's sake, take such particulars as the following. He will “fix his affections” immediately “on the Church wherein God has placed him,” and only “*through* that, on the great Catholic community throughout the world;” the English Church will be to him the visible embodiment and channel of his Lord's presence. 2. Her morning and evening prayer will be the central points of his public and social devotions; he will offer up those prayers, not as one of the accidentally present congregation, nor yet as one of the Catholic Church; but more definitely, as a member of the English Church: through her, with her, and for her, will his addresses ascend to God day after day, in the language she has placed in his mouth. In like manner, should there be prayers for Catholic unity used by certain members of our own Church as such, and others used by Roman Catholics as such, he will unite in the former rather than in the latter. And, 3. the sphere of his practical energies, the turning point of his hopes and fears, interests and disquietudes, the central position from which his view grows forth and expands, will be the Church through which he was regenerated, through which he has communion with the Body and Blood of Christ. He will be careful to make the most of all the salutary privileges she offers him; he will fight without ceasing against any disposition to repine at the comparative paucity of means of grace; he will love to contemplate, with humble and affectionate veneration, the admirable patterns of holiness he may find within her pale, nor suffer any difference of opinion, on a matter of

miner importance, to lessen his keen perception of their heavenly graces.—Pp. 67, 68.

Nor yet do I seek to encourage discontent with our Church herself, but only with that miserable system to which, for three hundred years, she has been so unfortunately committed.—P. 72.

It must be observed, however, that the idea of introducing, as it were, bodily among us some foreign pattern, according to the best conception we are able to form of it, would be absolute insanity; to think of it would be most extravagant, even to attempt its execution absolutely impossible. No! the one principal object of our observation must ever be *our own* Church; to study the nature and extent of her corruptions, and the remedies for them which her present resources are capable of supplying,—this must be, beyond any comparison, our principal task; the only question is, in what quarter are we to look for the *suggestion* of appropriate remedies?—P. 77.

Thus, then, everything seems to throw us back on that course of action which feelings of natural affection would in themselves suggest; viz. the making our own Church our one great centre of thought, as it must inevitably be our one great sphere of action. We must learn to dismiss all otiose and unfruitful *contemplation* of external models, whether primitive or foreign, and apply ourselves to the more homely task of labouring, by their help, to introduce among ourselves that vital principle, which has had so great a share in organizing those models.—P. 93.

And I will say plainly that nothing, in my judgment, would be fraught with more omnigenous mischief, or would more deservedly incur God's heavier displeasure, than any attempt to introduce generally among us at the present time any of those devotions to the Blessed Virgin, which occupy so prominent a place in foreign Churches.—P. 81.

Nothing can be further from the truth than the supposition that the British Critic has ever advocated their introduction among ourselves. Speaking only for myself, in July last I say, “So far as later introductions are concerned, such as Images, and Indulgences, and habitual Invocation of Saints, we should certainly be travelling out of our way to notice them.” In January, “Those who are pained and distressed by some circumstances in which the mediæval system differs from antiquity, have a most legitimate satisfaction in the history of the early Church, which exhibits Catholic faith as truly active and energizing, at a time when such peculiarities (we allude, e. g. to the pointed and habitual invocations of the Blessed Virgin and Saints) are not prevalent.” In the previous October, in a passage quoted by Mr. Palmer, I go still further; “So long as an English Churchman acts carefully up to the principles he has been taught, and *in so* acting feels himself in no way attracted towards these ways, *so long it would be a plain sin in him to resort to them.*” Nay more;

not only have I never expressed a wish (but the reverse) that these devotions should be generally practised by us at present—I have never even implied an opinion that, as popularly adopted, they are not mischievous and dangerous abroad; though neither have I, so at least I trust, implied the opposite opinion.—Pp. 85, 86.

Let us, then, fairly and honestly try the experiment. “High churchmen” of all grades profess belief in the fundamental Verities to which I just now alluded; let them unite in the use of all such means as are in our power, (which, I hope to shew in a future chapter, are very far from inconsiderable,) to imprint these doctrines on the innermost hearts of our fellow-churchmen as living and absorbing realities; and let them leave the result with perfect calmness, contentment, and tranquillity of heart in His hands, who, by His Apostle, has praised Abraham’s faith, in that he went out, not knowing whither he went. Should it be found that the more deeply and practically English Christians embrace these essential truths, so much the more powerfully they are attracted to such usages and devotions as are now in question; no stronger proof can be devised that those devotions are not injurious, but ministrative, to the central and paramount doctrines of the Gospel. Should the opposite be found the case, I suppose there is no one member of our Church who would desire their adoption: and the conclusion as to any given foreign country would be, that in its case either their use is attributable to particulars in the national history and character wherein it differs from England, or else (which is of course perfectly conceivable) that it is a real practical corruption, to which we may fitly desire that the Church should apply a remedy.—P. 87.

But now, even supposing a most extreme and imaginary hypothesis—supposing that compulsory confession of penitent to priest were suddenly resumed on a wide scale among us, the effect would be most mischievous. Why? Because the nature of those perplexities which cloud the conscience and bewilder the judgment of faithful servants of God in the lower ranks of life, or of those sins which oppress their memory, cannot be understood in their real nature, or rather will be most utterly misunderstood, by one whose whole past experience has been of the most opposite character: unless, indeed, he unite the rarest moral and intellectual gifts. Unless you expect every parish priest to combine the highest qualities of genius and imagination with the most winning gentleness, tenderness, forbearance, compassionateness, he will chill the heart of Christ’s little ones, by treating, as light and fantastical, perplexities which they feel deeply to be most serious, and to require most careful consideration; or he will crush and overwhelm them by forming a harsh and severe judgment on sins quite opposite in character to those towards which he has ever been tempted, but which, if he were able distinctly to place before his imagination the whole circumstances of the case, he would at

once feel were rather subjects for tender and loving expostulation than for stern rebuke.—P. 324.

Surely the very dilemma involved, either in proposing such an arrangement, or in projecting an extensive monastic scheme without it, should shew how little prepared our Church is at present for such a sudden development. I am not of course denying, that individual Christians, who share in the Catholic feeling which now springs up on all sides of us, will derive great benefit, and edification, and happiness, from uniting themselves voluntarily into small societies bound together by definite rules and frequent offices of devotion ; but arrangements of this kind may be quite safely, and will be far more profitably, left to adjust themselves : while any expectation of establishing such a system on a fixed and recognised basis within our Church is altogether visionary, until many well and wisely employed years shall have elapsed. No ! we must direct all our energy to devise some really powerful and available machinery for the moral education of the many, if we desire to reap any sufficient harvest of the mortified and contemplative few.—Pp. 435, 436.

Such advice, then, as this may surely be given with every prospect of success in those instances, already numerous and daily increasing in number, where feelings of acute repentance have been excited, and trembling anxiety as to spiritual prospects aroused, while on the one hand there is a keen perception of the hollowness and worldliness of Lutheran profession, and yet on the other hand a most natural misgiving as to the possible consequences of prematurely closing with what are called extreme opinions. Such religious practices as I have mentioned, carry with them their own evidence and warrant ; and they bring comfort to the mourner, the power of repentance to the sinner, the power of perseverance to the weak, the power of discerning religious truth to the feeble and perplexed. To do no more than realize gradually those truths which we have always professed with the lips—what is there in this which can alarm the most cautious ? and yet what more is wanted as the true medicine for all spiritual evils ? Such is the great blessing we derive from that profession of orthodoxy which our Church has retained : the Creeds and the Prayer-book have stored within them all that the sorrowful or sinful soul can need—all, that is, except supernatural grace ; and that our Church is also privileged to dispense. Why should we be downcast and dispirited, however fearful the corruptions which abound among us, when we have such vantage-ground as this ? What need we, but firm faith in our position, and in the presence of Christ with us His outcast flock ?

Two more observations will bring to a close this part of the subject. Great as would be the care taken that humble and dutiful Christians be not pressed unduly forward to doctrines for which they may not yet be ripe, another precaution should be

even more sedulously maintained ; viz. that all their religious and devotional reading should breathe the one true Catholic spirit. The possession of Mr. Newman's Sermons is a most truly happy circumstance for our Church ; and many of the more ordinary Roman Catholic works, by means of suitable omissions, will be very available for the purpose. * * *

Thus inestimable are the benefits which may be conferred, on the spread of the Gospel within our Church, by those who, from their position and their powers of mind, are able to exercise an influence on " holy and humble men of heart." Nor let these latter think that they have no share in forwarding the great work. So far from it, that there is no more efficacious instrument for removing misconception and softening prejudice than the personal presence of such as these. A humble Christian, who shews in his whole demeanour a profound humility and consciousness of sin ; thoughtful, unselfish, unceasing considerateness for all around him ; a reverent sympathy for good, from whatever quarter it presents itself ; an unpretending zeal in performing all the duties of his state of life ; such an one (little as he dreams of exercising any influence upon others) avails more than a thousand controversial arguments. He proves to those who see him, that the love of Catholic doctrine arises, neither from blind and carnal formalism, nor from sectarian bigotry, nor from a puerile love of splendour and external ornament, nor from the dreams of a poetical temperament, nor from the reasonings of deep erudition, but from a most deep and experimental conviction that this doctrine gives help, such as no other doctrine in the world can give, towards rescuing the soul from the power of Satan, and promoting its progress in every Christian virtue.

That such are our present duties and privileges, will be at once admitted by all who have concurred with the general statement of principles which has gone before. That very much more is also required, if the work is really to be accomplished which we may humbly hope that God is performing for us, if genuine Catholicism is to be restored to our desiring eyes,—this the same principles also establish. But in all such cases, God carefully keeps from man the power of *positive* co-operation : what will be His times and instruments in forwarding His own cause ; when and in what degree He will raise up men in the midst of us fitted for carrying out His gracious purpose ; and on what part of our existing system these men will firmly take their stand ; all this we must dutifully leave to Him. To trouble our minds with conjectures on such questions as these, much more to think of taking the matter out of God's hands into our own, would be a mark of that worldly and scheming spirit which occasionally pains us in passages of the Church's history, and which is, of all tempers of mind, the most certain to fail in bringing down blessings, that are really blessings, on the Church. By labouring, each in his place,

to keep his conscience pure, and seeking to know and do His will, members of our Church are fitting themselves to *be* His instruments, should He require their services; they are placing themselves, as it were, in that position for which He has predestined them, and where, if He needs them, He will look to find them. Nay, should the glorious work be really consummated, in what degree each one has been an instrument, in what measure his prayers or efforts may have contributed to the result, will be among the secrets reserved for the Great Day. That there may be individual exceptions to this, I admit; but surely, on the whole, such is the sober and simple truth.—Pp. 459—461.

I say, then, that those various heart-burnings, misunderstandings, perplexities, which surround us on all sides, deeply deplorable as they must appear to all possessed of any thoughtfulness, have never impressed me with any misgiving or distrust in our Church, but the very reverse. Others, however, as is well known, have been deeply shocked, surprised, perplexed, by them; and have felt the most serious questionings and doubts, whether a Society, thus fearfully distracted, could really be a home of Christ. Yet, on the other hand, they had learned to regard our Church's ordinances, and most the highest of all,—the Holy Eucharist, as the very fountains through which they derived their spiritual life: yes; through all the painful and anxious conflicts of which our Church has been the scene, the Presence of our Lord in the Eucharist had been the central figure, as it were, in the picture—the point from which all peace and comfort had flowed to their soul. Are they to regard these external disorders in our Church as a notice conveyed to them, that they must break from their very highest and holiest associations, and seek His Presence elsewhere? Such is the difficulty in which they were placed; and not a few members of our Church, finding themselves brought into so critical a position have taken that very course which would follow from those principles which I have humbly attempted to advocate; a course, surely, which must commend itself to all dutiful and serious minds, who are not absolutely bewildered by the technicalities of controversy. They have resolved to load the ordinances of our Church, as it were, with a heavier weight; they have regarded the lowering aspect of things around as a call from God to aim at still higher and stricter obedience, to open new paths of labour and self-denial; that they may put the matter to a practical issue, whether Christ will still give them strength in our Church for this more saintly life, or will summon them into a new position, that they may enjoy the fulness of His grace. And the response of all (I believe) without exception who have made this trial, has been most wonderfully harmonious: the more they have laboured to chasten and deny themselves, the more they have experienced, not a restless and uneasy desire for fuller privileges, but the very reverse; their treasure has been increased

of heavenly peace and joy in believing. The result, then, has been, that such Christians as those I have been describing, have obtained a deeper and more certain assurance than ever had been before in their power;—while we ordinary men have obtained, by means of the more visible and acknowledged austerity of life which has been here and there brought before our view, an *external* note, of a far higher and more heavenly nature than any which some among us may consider that we have lost. Nor can it be necessary to point out how that, in proportion as any member of our Church may have a deeper conviction of her prostrate, miserable, and corrupt condition, in that very proportion will such remarkable facts as those I have mentioned, appeal to him as peculiar and most constraining indications of God's will.

Such being the singularly gracious manifestations of His Presence with us which our Blessed Lord has vouchsafed, a right-minded and humble Christian will desire some very direct and unmistakeable personal call from God, before the question will even occur to him of ungratefully, if I may so say, turning his back on it.—Pp. 569, 570.

As to those, again, who have at present no difficulty in remaining with us, in what terms they would speak of that duty, it is not easy to determine; nor even, if it were, are we generally fit judges of the *strength* of our conviction, until the occasion arises which calls for action. In speaking then of myself, I speak only of myself: but so confining my words, I do plainly say, (not here to recite again those other notes of life in our Church to which I lately adverted,) that when I consider the wonderful and most heavenly graces which distinguish certain members of our Church whom I have the privilege to know; when I find—from those who are incomparably my own superiors in all good living, and who have more intimate knowledge of those to whom I allude,—that a closer and more habitual observation of their character raises it in their eyes in a degree they could not have before imagined; when the freest use of Roman books of practical religion does not give me any higher conception in *kind* of holiness than I observe to be recognised and exemplified among ourselves;—and when, on the other hand, I remember that it is within the reach of these men that God Himself has placed me; that any notion of attributing my own defects to deficiency in our Church's ordinances, rather than my own past and present habits of sinful neglect, would be contradictory to most certain and definite experience; and that those of my own acquaintance who have most *tried* those ordinances, most value them;—when I consider all this, I plainly say, that—supposing, under the influence of some apparent force of argument or some active impression on the imagination, I were to dissever myself from these objects of veneration,—I doubt if I should know one moment's peace of mind during the remainder of my life.—P. 572.

II.

UNITY AMONG MEMBERS OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH.

UNDER this head, it is intended to cite passages in which the author insists on the necessity and importance of unity *within the Church of England* as a first object, and a basis whereon to found our hopes of unity on any more extensive scale. And first the general intention of the author may be suitably inferred from the Dedication—

To all members of the English Church who have her welfare deeply at heart, these pages, which have been promoted by an earnest desire to bear part, if it might be allowed, in the great work of restoring unity of doctrine and action within her pale, are respectfully and affectionately inscribed.

And just as we should encourage in our minds a warm and hearty affection for serious Christians throughout all the world, (being confident of this, that so far forth as they are really serious, they have a true principle and sound faith, practically, even if unconsciously, energizing within them;) so we should also cherish a regard, in some respects even more especial and peculiar, to all serious Christians among ourselves, who join with us in affection to the English Church. All who seriously and unaffectedly desire to see that Church such in action as every Christian Church is in profession, and who are ready to devote their utmost energies to the accomplishment of that object, have, in point of fact,—and should be made more and more to feel that they have,—a very real bond of union and sympathy, however widely they may differ as to the means of that accomplishment. And if this be so, as it plainly is, even in cases where there is a radical contrariety of doctrinal profession, how much more will it be so, in cases where such profession is in fundamentals accordant. “Numbers there are among ourselves, who fully agree in the profession of attachment to the early Church, and a real wish to conform to its standard; in the desire to lay far greater stress than heretofore on prayer, obedience, and self-denial; in zeal for the Sacraments and other Church ordinances; and a deep sense of the unspeakable blessings which God gives us through their channel. And how painful a reflection to any one, who has imbibed so much of the Catholic spirit as to burn for union with all those who so much as bear the *name* of Christ, (so far as truth and faithfulness will allow,) how painful to him the reflection, that all this agreement is felt as yet to give no sufficient scope for genuine, hearty, unsuspecting sympathy, from the vivid perception we have of

mutual differences on points which, if less fundamental, are unhappily felt as even more obtrusive, and in a sense practical." "On the primary points of doctrine we all agree [so far as conscious intention goes] in reference to the same standard; yet little do we seem to feel how precious is this heritage of Catholic truth; how constraining and intimate a bond of union it will supply, when cordially embraced, to all Catholic hearts throughout Christendom." — Pp. 93, 94.

Such, then, is the alliance which, as I cannot but think, may without difficulty be maintained among "high-churchmen." They will be surprised to find how little necessity there is for introducing any doctrine or sentiment, which is controverted between us, into the discussion of matters of immediate practice; but, if it is to be a real and lasting alliance, there must be the fullest permission on both sides to state plainly our sentiments on questions of (what some might call) a more speculative character. Let us agree with each other from our innermost heart, as serious and truth-seeking men, to test the value of our respective views on points of difference, by discovering which alternative those adopt who carry out into most earnest practice our points of agreement. Let Mr. Isaac Williams, if he so please, still publish his opinion, that "human support and human comfort" were needful to St. Mary after our Lord's Ascension, while the promise of the Holy Ghost was the sufficient consolation of His disciples; let Dr. Hook continue to call Roman Catholics "Mariolaters;" let Mr. Wilson exercise his judgment on a Pope's bull, and characterize it as almost worthy of a "railing" censure; but let others have equal liberty, and with no greater remonstrance, to honour St. Mary as the highest and purest of creatures; to regard the Roman Church with affection and reverence; and to hold a Pope's dogmatic decree as at least exempt from our criticism and comment. It is impossible for our opinions to pain *them* more than theirs pain *us*; yet it will, I think, be confessed by all, that the British Critic has, in a surprising degree, refrained from all unfavourable comment on high-churchmen of a different complexion. Speaking again merely of myself; I have used language of very considerable respect and deference to Archdeacon Manning, Mr. Dodsworth, Mr. Heurtley, Dr. Hook, Dr. Jelf, Mr. Ernest Hawkins; and have in no one instance spoken of such divines in a different tone: and so, with regard to the other two writers I just now mentioned; for Mr. Wilson, though most slightly acquainted with him, I entertain feelings of extreme regard and respect; to Mr. Williams I look up with (I trust) single-minded love and reverence. On any *positive* doctrine which persons, such as some of these, should maintain as dear and precious to them, it would indeed be a matter of long and painful deliberation before I could bring myself to dissent from their judgment; but I have pleasure in believing that such is not the case: on the other hand, even *Saints* may

be wholly mistaken on matters beyond their personal experience ; much less can I follow even such excellent men as these, when they venture to *attack* Saints. But why may we not hold our respective opinions in mutual love and charity, and possess our souls in peace ? Why may we not hope, that by building on our many subjects of agreement, their number may be even increased ? Why, when heresy and infidelity are at our very doors, shall we waste that force in intestine divisions, which should rather be directed by our united efforts against the common foe ? When the Spartan in time of war was challenged by a fellow-soldier to single combat, " Rather," he replied, " let us decide the quarrel by our comparative prowess in to-morrow's engagement with the enemy." Let *our* zeal, accordingly, whether for the more Anglican or more Roman phase of doctrine, lead us not to barren and wasteful invectives ; but to a fair trial of the experiment, which will give us the most effectual help in evangelizing our large towns, in promoting holiness of life, and in restoring essential orthodoxy of faith.—Pp. 99—102.

But if there would appear so much ground for hope, even in dissenting communities among us, how much more in that Church where God's mercy has placed us, and where the Prayer-book itself affords such powerful co-operation in moulding the youthful mind on an anti-Lutheran model ?

But in addressing members of our own Church, to God be the praise, this need not be all. A Church which, even in the dark times that have succeeded the Great Sin of the 16th century, has borne, in some limited measure, so constant a witness to many great Catholic truths, affords common-ground in several other matters, besides this great foundation of all. I trust I may be able to shew English high-churchmen, on how very wide a field, without going one jot or tittle beyond their existing principles, they may be able fully to co-operate with many, whom they now regard with distrust and uneasiness ; and how willingly these last would reciprocate any confidence that might be reposed in them, by most strictly confining their practical exertions to the same objects. A further point then will be, to shew how miserably imperfect is the witness borne by our present system to doctrines, which all high-churchmen agree in considering paramount and essential ; I mean even such as our Blessed Lord's Divinity itself. And from this, the subject will naturally lead to such other particulars mentioned in my second chapter, as cannot be considered, by any possibility, to tend even distantly towards the transgression of what are sometimes called " the distinctive principles " of the English Church. How far, should we ever succeed in carrying out, even to a limited degree, the *non-distinctive* principles of the English Church, (those I mean which high-churchmen hold in common with the whole Catholic world,) the said " distinctive " principles will be found to

possess any solid existence whatever;—this is a question on which I have my own very definite opinion, but which I would most gladly leave to be determined by the event.—Pp. 292, 293.

I am not for a moment implying, that we should put from us the hope of conciliating religious “Evangelicals;” so far, so exceedingly far, from it, that, as has been observed by the author of the article on Bishop Jewel in his ‘Explanation,’ there is no more auspicious result which may be hoped from a fuller and freer development of Catholic Truth, than that an embodiment and visible witness of Divine wisdom and holiness will be shewn forth, which will more and more persuade and absorb into itself the more religious minds from among all parties of our Church.—P. 433.

All high-churchmen then, who are prepared to embrace this axiom, and act on it, may, I think, confidently indulge in the hope that a lasting and cordial union will be the result; they may confidently expect that when certain further questions, from being theoretical, shall have become immediately practical,—it will not be until, from having been points of difference, they shall have become points of agreement.—P. 434.

Thus inestimable are the benefits which may be conferred, on the spread of the Gospel within our Church, by those who, from their position and their powers of mind, are able to exercise an influence on “holy and humble men of heart.” Nor let these latter think that they have no share in forwarding the great work. So far from it, that there is no more efficacious instrument for removing misconception and softening prejudice, than the personal presence of such as these. A humble Christian, who shews in his whole demeanour a profound humility and consciousness of sin; thoughtful, unselfish, unceasing considerateness for all around him; a reverent sympathy for good from whatever quarter it presents itself; an unpretending zeal in performing all the duties of his state of life; such an one (little as he dreams of exercising any influence upon others) avails more than a thousand controversial arguments. He proves to those who see him, that the love of Catholic doctrine arises, neither from blind and carnal formalism, nor from sectarian bigotry, nor from a puerile love of splendour and external ornament, nor from the dreams of a poetical temperament, nor from the reasonings of deep erudition, but from a most deep and experimental conviction, that this doctrine gives help, such as no other doctrine in the world can give, towards rescuing the soul from the power of Satan, and promoting its progress in every Christian virtue.

That such are our present duties and privileges, will be at once admitted by all who have concurred with the general statement of principles which has gone before. That very much more is also required, if the work is really to be accomplished which we may humbly hope that God is performing for us, if genuine Catholicism is to be restored to our desiring eyes,—this the same principles

also establish. But in all such cases, God carefully keeps from man the power of *positive* co-operation : what will be His times and instruments in forwarding His own cause ; when and in what degree He will raise up men in the midst of us fitted for carrying out His gracious purpose ; and on what part of our existing system these men will firmly take their stand ; all this we must dutifully leave to Him. To trouble our minds with conjectures on such questions as these, much more to think of taking the matter out of God's hands into our own, would be a mark of that worldly and scheming spirit which occasionally pains us in passages of the Church's history ; and which is, of all tempers of mind, the most certain to fail in bringing down blessings, that are really blessings, on the Church. By labouring, each in his place, to keep his conscience pure, and seeking to know and do His will, members of our Church are fitting themselves to *be* His instruments, should He require their services ; they are placing themselves, as it were, in that position for which He has predestined them, and where, if He needs them, He will look to find them. Nay, should the glorious work be really consummated, in what degree each one has been an instrument, in what measure his prayers or efforts may have contributed to the result, will be among the secrets reserved for the Great Day. That there may be individual exceptions to this, I admit ; but surely, on the whole, such is the sober and simple truth.—Pp. 460, 461.—Vide also p. 9.

I trust, then, that during the present chapter I have kept sufficiently to the engagement which I made. I trust that such particulars as those which I have specified, imply no allusion to any matters of doctrine, which are at issue between high-churchmen of different complexions. Why then may we not all combine in the prosecution of such designs as these, and leave the questions on which we differ to be decided by the practical effect which may be produced by actively following out the principles on which we agree ? If it be granted that the aiming at such objects as I have ventured to put forward as desirable, implies of itself no set purpose of “Romanizing” our Church, I must beg leave to doubt whether any single one of her members entertains any such purpose. For as to secret negotiations and understandings with members of that Church, these and similar rumours, to the best of my own knowledge, are without the very slightest foundation in fact. And surely, if high-churchmen are slow to co-operate in the prosecution of objects which *on their own principles* are desirable, from a fear of the direction in which such a course might tend, they are taking the most effectual way to confirm us in what they consider our most serious error ; our belief, namely, that high-church principles, honestly carried out on their positive side, *must* lead to Rome. If high-church principles be really substantive and distinct, what possible danger can there be in heartily and ungrudgingly carrying them forward to their results ?

and if they be not substantive, who could grieve that this fact should be established by means of a fair trial?—Pp. 472, 473.

It is obvious that many passages quoted under the first head will bear closely upon the present subject also.

III.

CONSIDERATENESS TOWARDS DISSENTIENTS.

THE following passages are adduced to shew with what remarkable tenderness and indulgence the author everywhere speaks of those from whose views of religious truth he is compelled to differ; how carefully he distinguishes between individuals and the system to which they are committed; how sacred he accounts the conscientious persuasions even of those who have been trained in error; how earnestly he disclaims anything like *necessary* moral superiority on the part of those whose privileges he considers superior; how anxiously he beats about for common ground whereon those may unite who agree in certain essentials.

No word could be found applicable to all these various classes, without being wholly inadequate to the amount of religious error in which some of them are unquestionably involved. That of “dissentients” has been chosen, not as free from objection on the latter ground, but, as on the whole, the least exceptionable.

How can those be defended who, half a century ago, called on all Christians to believe that, unless they were conscious of a sudden conversion, they could not hope for Heaven? Or those who, at a later period, called on their brethren at once to take up an opinion, founded on arguments from the Fathers, that *Presbyterians are not within the Christian Covenant?* And both these classes seemed by their language to imply, that it was the duty of “high and low, rich and poor,” at once to receive these respective theologies, *so utterly astounding and revolting* to all their early prepossessions; whereas in my own case I continually went out of my way to urge on them, that it would be absolutely *sinful* if they did so; and that their duty was to act conscientiously on their *existing* principles.—Pp. 61, 62.

I did not expect to find it very different from other “Evangelical” works; and in them I had often met with very much which made me feel great sympathy with the writers, and which deepened my perception of the points of agreement among all serious

Christians; even though united with more or less of a painful character, and certainly with a far lower standard of holiness, with far less realization of the sinfulness of sin, and far less depth of spiritual experience, than I find in Roman Catholic devotional works.—P. 169, n.

Having so far guarded myself against misconception, I will relieve my own feelings by saying plainly, as I have said in print more than once before, that though I feel bound, at all fitting occasions and in all fitting ways, to protest heart and soul against the Evangelical system, I fully recognise many who have at various times professed that system, as so exceedingly my own superiors, that the very notion of even a comparison is most painful. Who indeed can so much as mention the names of Cecil, or Scott, or Martyn, without adding from his heart expressions of honour and reverence? But I allude not only to such unusual specimens as these, but to great numbers of admirable men, who, especially at the latter end of the last century and the beginning of this, followed in their train. Earnest persons naturally,—nay, rightly, embrace that form of opinions which they find in their own time to be coexistent with earnestness; and in proportion as the voice of their conscience is brought into distinctness, in the most heretical propositions *they* will see and realise great Christian truths. They learn to say that we are justified by faith without inherent righteousness: they mean only that holy men rest their hopes of salvation, in no way on the *thought* of such inherent righteousness, but solely and indivisibly on the merits of their Lord. They learn to say that the justified have assurance of salvation; they mean only to express, as Catholics would express, their humble yet hearty confidence, that “He who has begun a good work in them will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ,” provided only that they remain (as by His help they fully *purpose* to remain) faithful to His grace, watchful against the approach of sin, diligent in the practice of virtue. Thus their conscience, and religious instinct, and holy obedience, neutralize their heretical creed; and the evil which accrues to them from that creed is of a negative not a positive nature.—Pp. 208, 209.

And thus I bring to an end this most invidious part of my task; a part in regard to which I feel that nothing can excuse me for having entered upon it, except absolute necessity: yet surely quite necessary it is. I most gladly and willingly acknowledge it as one of the many benefits our Church has received from the Evangelical party, that they have borne a steady and consistent witness to the extreme importance of holiness as a test of religious truth. So far am I from being able to follow those who protest against such a view, and appeal rather to the argumentative collation of Scripture texts or patristic writings, that I know no ultimate result, short of atheism itself, in which such a line of argument must consistently issue: as I hope to express more at length in a future chapter. I am most deeply convinced, that next to

the plain voice of our own conscience, the one great note, given by God to guide us into the truth, is the visible work of the Holy Ghost in others ; nay, that the latter has no inconsiderable place in checking and directing our conscience itself. I most fully agree with the Evangelicals, then, on the ground of appeal ; what remains but to join issue *on* that ground ? That even at the present day there are many Evangelicals far more attached to the truths accidentally connected with their system than to the heresies which essentially distinguish it, I most gladly believe ; nor could any result be more deeply gratifying to my own feelings than if only one such should be led, by means of what I have put forth, to perceive how much more deeply and genuinely the same truths are witnessed in the pure and undefiled Gospel preserved through every age by the Church Catholic.—Pp. 244—246.

Nay, to such an extent has this mania for external evidence been carried, that a principle is most plainly implied by numbers amongst us, though its maintenance by any sane person would have been incredible but for general experience, that it is lawful to summon Dissenters to leave that community wherein God has placed them, wherein they have learnt sacred truths from their parents or teachers, and with which their most holy associations are interwoven,—to summon them, I say, to such a course, not by appeals to their conscience—not by leading them through their system to another, and fixing their minds on those truths which it contains, till from them they go on into further truths—nor yet, again, by awakening their spiritual desires for a gift which Sacramental grace can alone supply,—but by an argumentative exposition of Apostolical Succession and the Divine right of Bishops. In other words, it is considered (though I am conscious that the naked statement looks like a burlesque) that religious men of the lower classes *cannot* estimate a higher idea of sanctity, when fairly set before them, but *can* do justice to both sides on such questions as these ; 1, Whether Episcopacy, though universal in early times, be necessary, while prayers for the dead, which were equally universal, are *not* so considered ; 2, Whether Episcopacy *did* universally exist in early times, with an examination of the famous passage of St. Jerome, and the famous examples of Corinth and Alexandria ; 3, Whether, in point of fact, the English Church *has* the succession, with an historical digression on the Nag's Head controversy, and a ritual discussion on the forms necessary for ordination ; 4, and chiefly of all, Whether visible union with what is considered to constitute the rest of the Church Catholic be not also necessary ; visible union, on which learned men tell us that so much more stress was laid in early times, than on the Apostolical Succession. And it is seriously implied by multitudes of English Churchmen, that Dissenters may, without grievous sin, leave the community which to them has been in so high and true a sense the ordinance of God, from no better reason than the ridiculous child's play of professing a view on

such questions as these; and that ministers of our Church may, without grievous sin, tempt them to such a course.

The author of the most able and valuable "Appeal to the Members of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge," mentions with reprobation a sentiment of the Bishop of Chester's, that "if a man feels that he has been personally benefited by the instructions of a Dissenting teacher, the only instructions within his reach, no argument can persuade him that he ought never to have listened to them;" and censures also the Bishop's further remark that "perhaps it is too much to expect that . . . all men should think alike upon such subjects as diocesan episcopacy, or infant Baptism, &c." For one, I incline to be more hopeful than the Bishop of the *ultimate* reunion, by God's grace, of all Christians; but take the matter in a practical light, can the excellent writer really mean that ordinary Christians are able to form a judgment on such matters as these last, or that they are *not* able to form a very sufficient judgment on the plain question, whether, by help of advice from a dissenting minister, they have been able to contend more successfully against habits of sloth, or selfishness, or impurity, or anger? It may be better, lest I be misunderstood, to add here a note belonging to one of my articles. "Would it be thought a promising trait, if a Wesleyan, e. g., born of parents religious up to the average, were, at the age of ten years, seriously to consider the question whether or not he were in a state of schism, and how far the institution of bishops was apostolical? And if not at ten years, what is the proper age for him to call in question all that he has been taught, and sit in judgment on his parents and elders? On the contrary, surely the position of our Church as regards Dissenters, if we rightly view it, is no unfavourable one. We believe Catholic doctrine to be perfectly consistent with our formularies; and we know it to be such that, in proportion as it is adequately exhibited, it attracts most powerfully the religious instincts of the serious mind, under whatever system trained. We believe, too, that after the conscience has been awakened and a course of obedience begun, the heart of those with whom we have to do is still unsatisfied and their mind restless, from their want (however unknown to themselves the cause) of that inward gift which the English Church, for one, is entrusted by God with the power of dispensing in her Sacrament. No need of a spurious liberalism, or of any the least compromise of truth. Let us aim at making the English Church such, that by her appearance and bearing she may exhibit outwardly what she contains within; and let us hold, whether by words or actions, this language to Dissenters: 'We are witnesses to a doctrine and dispensers of a blessing far higher than you can attain in your present position, and which are the appointed medicine for the ills and miseries from which in vain otherwise you will seek an escape. Act the *more* diligently, in consequence of what we say, on your *existing* principles; the

greater your diligence, the earlier will be your conviction of the comparative worthlessness and inefficacy of your present system, the greater will be the eagerness with which your whole moral nature will yearn for what *we* can give you.' It has been said that great numbers of Dissenters are in a state of the most abandoned profligacy. Whether they are worse in this respect than Churchmen, we have no means and no wish to decide; of course in *such* cases the English clergyman would 'be instant in season, out of season reprove, rebuke, exhort,' as claiming authority, and appealing to their conscience in confirmation of his words. And should he succeed in any one such case in 'converting the sinner from the error of his way,' there could not be much question that the poor rescued soul would gladly follow, with implicit deference, the spiritual instruction of his preserver. But he has not this argument in dealing with persons who are *not* grossly vicious; and the question before us is, how is he to address *them*? That a Dissenter may have been often enough perplexed and confused by being confidently, and as if angrily, told he is in a state of schism (as though he had placed himself there), we can readily conceive; that he may have been deterred by it from religious action altogether, under a persuasion of the impossibility of discovering truth, this we can imagine; but that he should have been persuaded by it, and become a sound and docile churchman, this we *cannot* fancy. Can any one?'—Pp. 263—265 *n.*

Of course a very far more important point of contrast is afforded in the high and admirable religious attainments of great numbers among the Protestants,—a fact forming so marked an opposition to anything witnessed in the heathen world during the early conflicts of the Church. This consideration I omit in the text, merely as not bearing on the subject I am now upon.—P.275 *n.*

Though we should earnestly endeavour so to guard all we say, as to involve the least possible reflection on those whom it is so highly his duty to reverence. In other cases, we should rather fix his mind on the truest and highest parts of his existing system; not concealing, perhaps, from his knowledge those further truths towards which we hope to attract him, but at the same time earnestly impressing upon him the maxim, that it would be even sinful in him to leap forward, as it were, to reach them, before his conscience should be fully ripe for their reception. Above all, we should, with our whole heart and soul, urge upon him the continued practice of such duties as daily self-examination, habitual watchfulness of conscience, frequent prayer; for these are the only safeguards he can possess against liability to the most outrageous and extravagant delusions. The greater stress he lays on these duties, the deeper sense he acquires of the sinfulness of sin and the craft and constant hostility of his great spiritual enemy, the more zealous and earnest will he be in pressing forward towards a new range of doctrine, which may promise him increased help and support against their assaults. It will

frequently happen, that he will suddenly observe himself to have reached, by such means as these, a series of truths, the very contradictions of which he had otiosely held in times past: here is a most unexceptionable mode of abandoning early prepossessions. Or, if he be intellectually gifted, he may discern that the doctrines, witnessed to him by his conscience, are theoretically inconsistent with some of his traditional opinions, to which his conscience bears no witness: here, also, he will obviously please God by giving up those traditional opinions.

But what shall we say of other opinions he has imbibed in a similar manner, and which have therefore the sacredness of early association; which, however, conscience does not *witness* on one side, nor yet does either conscience or intellectual inference from conscience *contradict* on the other? As a strong illustration of what I mean, I may instance the sacredness he may have learned to attach to the ministers or ordinances of his religious community. Most certainly it *may* be his bounden duty to abandon such opinions; but as certainly the “onus probandi” lies signally and emphatically with those who call on him to do so. He has learned these opinions from God Himself, for they were part of that very system to which God consigned him for early instruction; nothing, then, short of the most urgent and irresistible proofs, will justify him in resigning them. This is a question of the deepest practical importance at the present time, as is very plain; and I hope in a future chapter to consider it with greater particularity.—Pp. 284—286, *et seq.* *Vide the pages following.*

Now how full of hopefulness is this whole view of the matter, in respect to that object which must be so very near to the heart of all who love their Lord with any life and sincerity,—the ultimate re-union of all faithful Christians; and the consequent re-edification of the Church in all its characteristic glory, as the rallying point of all that is high and holy: whereby the forces of good might be concentrated in action against their common enemies, instead of being weakened and exhausted by their intestine divisions, and thus affording an easy triumph to the powers of the world! Oh! to whom would not the labour of a life appear but dust in the balance, if it were permitted before death to see even a distant prospect of so glorious a consummation? And how deeply interesting then is the present discussion, if the views here maintained be indeed well-founded! For surely there is no religious community in the land, among whose members we might not be able to circulate (in writing or otherwise) such appeals to their conscience as these; appeals which should make it a point of careful solicitude to avoid all allusion to such matters of infinitely minor importance, as external ritual or other outward forms; nay, which might put aside matters in themselves so vital and essential even as sacramental grace, but which belong to a later period in the religious course, and will be eagerly accepted—nay, sought for, by those

who begin in the humble path of obedience and self-denial; appeals which should lay their whole stress in enforcing on the consciences of all, those great duties to which the consciences of all would most surely, sooner or later, be found to respond. I am not meaning, of course, that such appeals should be confined to barren and general exhortations, which would be next to useless. But everything, surely, might be hoped from more definite and practical addresses; as, e. g. the description, in its various details, of the real Christian character; of the humility, non-censoriousness, charitableness, contentment, cheerfulness, zealous labour in our worldly calling, humiliation for past sin, and the rest, which are its characteristic features: again, from the suggestion of definite practical rules, minute, accurate details and helps for the real and earnest performance, day by day, of such duties as the following, and the performance of them as *being* duties: careful self-examination, regular and well-performed prayer, earnest and habitual meditation.

But if there would appear so much ground for hope even in dissenting communities among us, how much more in that Church where God's mercy has placed us, and where the Prayer-book itself affords such powerful co-operation in moulding the youthful mind on an anti-Lutheran model! It will be my anxious endeavour, then, in the two following chapters—and on a subject so painfully serious and important, I earnestly wish and pray for God's guidance to my endeavour—to express, at least in some very inadequate degree, 1st, the extreme, the almost incredible corruption of our actual system in such particulars; and 2ndly, the kind of practical remedies which promise most hopefully for a gradual restoration. But in addressing members of our own Church, to God be the praise, this need not be all. A Church which, even in the dark times that have succeeded the Great Sin of the 16th century, has borne, in some limited measure, so constant a witness to many great Catholic truths, affords common ground in several other matters, besides this great foundation of all. I trust I may be able to shew English high-churchmen, on how very wide a field, without going one jot or tittle beyond their existing principles, they may be able fully to co-operate with many whom they now regard with distrust and uneasiness; and how willingly these last would reciprocate any confidence that might be reposed in them, by most strictly confining their practical exertions to the same objects. A further point then will be, to shew how miserably imperfect is the witness borne by our present system to doctrines which all high-churchmen agree in considering paramount and essential; I mean even such as our Blessed Lord's Divinity itself. And from this, the subject will naturally lead to such other particulars mentioned in my second chapter, as cannot be considered, by any possibility, to tend even distantly towards the transgression of what are sometimes called "the distinctive principles" of the English Church.—Pp. 290—292.

An article appeared in the "Foreign and Colonial Quarterly Review" for October 1843, from which I have already made one quotation; an article distinguished for a peculiar kindness of language and tone, in regard to a class of theologians, from whom the writer himself widely differs in many most important particulars. There has hardly yet appeared so encouraging an omen on the prospects of our Church, as is afforded by such thoughtful considerateness: surely if all serious persons among us would but agree to put aside the spirit of anger and acrimonious censure, to dwell with loving eagerness on their points of agreement, and aim at obtaining a full comprehension and appreciation of each other's meaning on points of difference, daily would our points of agreement increase in number, and our points of difference diminish; and the eyes of us all would be gradually opened to discern what is that body of external and substantive doctrine, which really corresponds to the perceptions, the desires, and the aspirations, of the holy and spiritual mind. I wish that the writer of that article, and those who agree with him, could fully understand, how acute is the pain which many who dissent from their views experience, when a plain sense of duty urges us to put forward direct and open statements, which we cannot but know will occasion them much distress and misgiving; and how earnestly we desire them to believe, that the most frank and uncompromising opposition to their fundamental views, on what may be termed ecclesiastical politics, implies no want of the deepest respect and sympathy, not only for their high personal character, but also for the straightforward and unflinching zeal with which they bear witness to the claims of religion in the face of statesmen and worldly politicians.—Pp. 430, 431.

I am not for a moment implying, that we should put from us the hope of conciliating religious Evangelicals; so far, so exceedingly far, from it, that, as has been observed by the author of the article on Bishop Jewel in his "Explanation," there is no more auspicious result which may be hoped from a fuller and freer development of Catholic Truth, than that an embodiment and visible witness of Divine wisdom and holiness will be shewn forth, which will more and more persuade and absorb into itself the more religious minds from among all parties of our Church.—P. 433.

A standard linear barcode consisting of vertical black lines of varying widths on a white background.

AA 000 564 008 1

